

Department of Health and Family Services
Division of Children and Family Services

To: County Human and Social Service Directors
DCFS/Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare

CC: DCFS/Bureau of Programs and Policies
DHFS/DMT Bureau of Fiscal Services
DHFS/OSF Area Administration
eWiSACWIS Project Team
DOJ/Director of State Courts- Children's Court Improvement Office

From: DCFS/Office of Program Evaluation and Planning

Subject: Documenting Use of Shelter Care and Secure Detention Facilities

**eWiSACWIS Program
Operations Memo**

No: 2006-01
Date: January 20, 2006

Topic Areas: Placements, In-Home Services, AFCARS and Title IV-E

Effective Date: February 13, 2006

Purpose: The purpose of this memo is to provide direction to WiSACWIS users regarding documentation of the use of shelter care and secure detention facilities.

Background:

States are required to submit data related to out-of-home placements, either arranged via a voluntary placement agreement or under court order, to the federal Children's Bureau to meet Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting Requirements (AFCARS). For AFCARS, any placement which exceeds 24 hours is subject to reporting requirements. This data is used to measure state performance on key permanency outcomes including Placement Stability and Re-entry. Stability refers to the number of different placement settings a child experiences during a given placement episode. Re-entry refers to the subsequent removal of a child after a previous discharge from a placement episode.

Placement documentation entered into eWiSACWIS is also used to facilitate Title IV-E eligibility and reimbursability determinations. This documentation enables claims to be made to the federal Title IV-E program for placement and administrative costs associated with children who are placed outside the family home.

Current direction and guidance for documenting out-of-home placements in eWiSACWIS is provided in the [eWiSACWIS Placement Documentation Manual](#). This manual defines key terms associated with placement documentation, provides an overview of documentation requirements for the various placement settings and contains How Do I Guides delineating documentation procedures for the various placement settings. The manual is located at the following website:

http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/wisacwis/knowledge_web/Helpdesk/plcm_manual.htm

Given recent reviews of case specific placement patterns and their effect on placement re-entry and stability rates and the continuing concerns related to the state's performance on the permanency outcomes

described above, the Division has identified a critical need to provide specific direction on when and how to properly document the use of shelter care and secure detention facilities in eWiSACWIS.

Current Documentation Practices for Shelter Care and Secure Detention Facilities:

Currently, there is significant variation from county to county regarding when and how the use of shelter care or secure detention facilities is documented in eWiSACWIS. Some counties enter these settings in the Out-of-Home Placement (OHP) page after a child (or juvenile) has been in the facility for a certain number of days. Other counties may or may not enter the use of the facilities in the OHP page or the In-Home Services (IHS) page depending upon local expectations or case-specific circumstances. In order to support more consistent and accurate documentation, particularly documentation associated with AFCARS reporting and Title IV-E procedural requirements, the Division will be updating the eWiSACWIS Placement Documentation Manual to provide a direction on documentation of these facilities and will be establishing specific Service Categories, Service Types and Placement Status values to support statewide consistency in data entry.

The changes in the placement manual will reflect specific direction regarding when use of a shelter care or secure detention facility must be documented in the OHP page. This will include instances where the use of the facility is the beginning of a placement episode or where use of the facility denotes a change in the child's placement as ordered by the court. For other instances where these facilities are used, such as use to fulfill a sanction or a 72-hour hold as authorized by state statutes, the placement may only be documented in the IHS page.

Changes to the eWiSACWIS Placement Documentation Manual:

The changes to the manual will provide specific direction on when and how to enter the use of shelter and secure detention facilities into eWiSACWIS. This direction will specify that the OHP page may only be used to document the use of shelter and secure detention facilities when the facility is being used as or becomes an primary physical placement of the child, i.e. the child is taken into temporary physical custody and placed in the facility or the facility is used as a sanction or a hold, but the child does not return home from a sanction or hold as originally anticipated. When the shelter or secure detention facility is being used as a temporary corrective action service, such as sanction or a 72 hour hold, the county may choose to enter the use of the facility in eWiSACWIS, and, if so, the data entry must be entered as a service in the IHS page. If the use of shelter or secure detention is initially invoked as a sanction or hold and the child (or juvenile) does not return home, and instead, remains in the facility for continuing placement or pending placement in another setting, the use of the facility must be documented in the OHP page.

The purpose of the change in documentation requirements described above is to clarify when use of shelter or secure detention facilities must be recorded as on out-of-home placement for Title IV-E and AFCARS purposes. Use of facilities in a temporary basis as an in-home service does not affect Title IV-E or AFCARS and allows counties to document the use of these facilities for the child and generates payments if necessary. This approach will also allow counties to document the use of shelter and secure detention facilities for children (or juveniles) already in care without appearing as a change in the child's placement and to serve as a vehicle for documenting the use of these facilities for short-term sanctions and agency holds without appearing as re-entries into out-of-home care.

Examples of these documentation requirements will be provided in the revised placement manual. The revisions to the eWiSACWIS Placement Documentation Manual, including updated How Do I Guides for documenting use of these facilities in the OHP page and in the IHS page. These updates will be completed and posted to the designated website by January 2006.

New Service Categories, Service Types and Placement Status Values for Use in the OHP and IHS Pages:

In order to support these new documentation requirements and to promote the reliability of data related to shelter care and detention facilities for federal, state and local reporting purposes, two new Service Categories will be created for both the OHP page for placement documentation and the IHS page for corrective action services, i.e. sanctions or 72-hour holds. The two new Service Categories will be structured as follows:

Shelter Care- In-Home
Shelter Care- OHP

Secure Detention- In-Home
Secure Detention- OHP

In the OHP page, these Service Categories will be linked to their respective Service Type values and Placement Setting values. For both Service Category values associated with the IHS and OHP pages, two new Service Types will be created for use at the county level. These Service Types will accommodate both paid and non-paid status for the Providers linked to the respective Service Type as determined by the agency. For county agencies that choose to or would like to continue to be able to designate payment s for shelter care or secure detention services and/or placements, the designated agency staff should contact the eWiSACWIS Helpdesk to enable this feature for providers to be linked to the Paid Service Type values. Otherwise, if the county chooses to or wishes to continues there services or placements as non-pay in eWiSACWIS, the current Shelter Care and Secure Detention Providers used by the agency should be linked to the new Shelter-Non-Paid or Secure Detention-Non-Paid Service Type values.

For Shelter Care, the Placement Status (settings) values that will be able to be selected will be either Shelter or Reception Center-Shelter. For Secure Detention, the Placement Status (settings) values will be Detention and Reception Center-Detention.

The new Service Categories and their links to the specific Placement Status values will be put into production by January 31, 2006. Any new placements documented in the OHP page or any new services in the HIS window that begin after the effective date of February 13, 2006 are to be documented with providers that have been linked to the respective new Service Category, Type and Placement Status values as described above.

Contacts:

Representatives from the Division will be meeting with county fiscal and program staff at upcoming regional roundtables and will continue addressing specific questions and concerns regarding this change with the respective OSF-Human Service Area Coordinators. In addition, these changes will be reviewed and discussed with participants at the upcoming April 2006 PAW/TAW Meeting in Green Bay, WI. The Division will also be reviewing these changes with eWiSACWIS Helpdesk staff and with the Statewide Eligibility Unit to further support counties' ability to implement these changes.

Once the requirements prescribed by the revised eWiSACWIS Placement Documentation Manual are effective, questions regarding data entry are to be directed to the eWiSACWIS Helpdesk at:

- Telephone - (608) 261-4400 or toll-free (866) 335-2180,
- TTY: 1-608-836-2852
- email - Helpdesk@wi.gov (include eWiSACWIS in subject line)